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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN ENVIRONMENT UPDATE, JANUARY 31, 2006

[1](#)1. Summary: This information is drawn primarily from the Kazakhstani press and has not yet been verified. The opinions expressed in this report, therefore, should not be interpreted as official positions and/or policy of the U.S. Government.

-- GOK Appropriates over 60 Million Tenge for Bird Flu Treatment
-- New Minister of the Environment Appointed
-- Number of People Infected with HIV and AIDS Continues to Grow
-- Mangystau Oblast Plans to Build a Repository for Radioactive Wastes
-- Oil spill into the Caspian Sea at the Port of Aktau
-- Kazakhstan Must Develop its Renewable Energy Sources
-- New Plans to Build a Nuclear Power Station in Kazakhstan
-- First Communications Satellite to be Launched by June 20
-- Many Lives Lost due to Severe Weather
-- Violations Have Been Revealed in the "Drinking Water" program in RK

GOK Appropriates over 60 Million Tenge for Bird Flu Treatment

[1](#)2. The Kazakhstani government has appropriated more than 60 million tenge to procure a medicinal treatment of the bird flu, the Deputy Chief State Health Inspector of Kazakhstan and Sanitary & Epidemiological Service's Chief Physician Kenes Ospanov said. "The Swiss medicine Tamiflu has demonstrated its efficiency in treating people infected with the bird flu," he said at a January 17 press conference in Almaty. He stressed that the medicine would not be freely sold because of the risk of people "buying it up just in case and filling their personal stocks," leaving the medicine in short supply for the infected. Ospanov also announced that Kazakhstan intends to buy bird flu vaccines abroad in the future. Meanwhile, Kazakhstani scientists at the Agriculture Research Institute, part of the National Biotechnology Center, are developing a vaccine against the bird flu. The vaccine will be "very effective" in the fight against the spread of the avian flu among birds. Scientists have not yet specified the completion date of the vaccine as no funds have been received from the state. (Interfax-Kazakhstan, January 16, 17, 2006)

New Minister of the Environment Appointed

[1](#)3. On January 19, President Nazarbayev signed a decree appointing ex-governor of the Karaganda Oblast, Kamalitin Mukhamedzhanov, as the environmental protection minister. Mukhamedzhanov, 57, graduated from the Ust-Kamenogorsk Road Construction Institute and the Russian State Service Academy under the Russian Federation President, DSc, and holds degrees in mechanical engineering and engineering economy. (Interfax-Kazakhstan, January 19, 2006)

Number of People Infected with HIV and AIDS Continues to Grow

[1](#)4. As of November 2005, 846 cases of HIV infection were reported compared to 633 during the same period of 2004. Between January and November 2005, 93 new AIDS cases were reported compared with 68 during the same period in 2004. In November 2005, 101 new HIV cases were registered as compared with 54 in 2004. In Kazakhstan, a country of 15.1 million, 4696 HIV infected people were registered as of January 1, 2005, and 5440 as of late November 2005, including 313 AIDS cases. (Interfax-Kazakhstan, January 12, 2005)

Mangystau Oblast Plans Repository for Radioactive Wastes

[1](#)5. Mangystau Oblast plans to build a regional repository for low-level and average-level radioactive wastes in 2008. The development of the feasibility study has been scheduled for 2007, while the construction is tentatively scheduled for [1](#)2008. According to Orynbasar Togzhanov, Deputy Head of the Mangystau Oblast Administration for Managing Natural Resources, this repository will store unclaimed radioactive wastes around Aktau. Togzhanov added that the oblast has concluded a contract on the depository construction with the Institute of Nuclear Physics and the National Nuclear Center

of Kazakhstan. (Interfax-Kazakhstan, January 12, 2005)

Oil Spill into the Caspian Sea at the Port of Aktau

16. Approximately one ton of oil spilled into the Caspian Sea at the port of Aktau on January 6. The incident occurred while loading the Lenkoran tanker (Baku, Azerbaijan), as reported by the Kazakhstani Emergency Situations Ministry. According to Ykhas Nogayev, Head of the Mangystau Oblast Administration for Managing Natural Resources, the damage inflicted to the environment totaled 1.5 million tenge. "The site of the incident has been enclosed by booms and measures to mop up the oil have been taken," he said. On January 18, the Mangystau oblast territorial administration for environment protection announced that the loading operator "Artic Overseas S.A. Kazakhstan" LLP and the crew of the Lenkoran were responsible for the oil spill by overfilling tank #12. The total damage is estimated at 834,565 tenge. The Administration has sent a protocol-claim to defaulters to compensate for the damage. (Interfax-Kazakhstan, Jan. 6, Earthwire Kazakhstan, Jan. 7, Panorama, Jan. 13, Interfax-Kazakhstan, Jan. 18, 2006)

Kazakhstan Must Develop Its Renewable Energy Sources

17. As a result of heightened interest in renewable energy sources (RES), the world consumption of sun and wind powered RES has grown by 25%-30% between 1984 and 2005. Annual investments during this period totaled 10%. Despite having enormous potential for wind energy development (3 TW a year) and ranking first worldwide in wind energy resources per capita according to "Kazselenergooproekt" SRI, there is only one small 500 kW wind assembly unit in Kazakhstan. The unit was built recently by the "Almatyavtomatika" company. However, there are about 15 perspective sites for big wind power stations in Kazakhstan, including Dzungarian Gates and Shelek corridor in the Almaty oblast. Kazakhstan's vast territory, remoteness of many settlements from power sources, cost of power transportation and environmental safety issues also attest to the need to develop renewable energy sources. To develop this sector, a number of state programs and GOK resolutions have been adopted, such as:

"On Measures to Implement Energy Saving Policy in the RK,"

A law "On Conserving Energy,"

"On The Program of Developing Electric Energy up to 2030"

"On the Development of Wind Energy"

At the end of the last year, a bid for the construction of a 5MW 5MW

pilot wind power station at Dzungarian Gates was won by ALD-Consulting LLP, although Japanese Tohoku Electric Power Do Inc. also plans to participate in the project. As the project is risky due to a lack of normative acts, the EBRD and National Innovation Fund also intend to participate in the project. ("Development of alternative sources of energy in the world" by Erkebulan Orazaliyev in "Kazakhstan in Global Processes, No. 4, 2005; Panorama, January 20, 2006; Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, January 27, 2006.)

New Plans to Build a Nuclear Power Station in Kazakhstan

18. Kazakhstani Prime Minister Daniyal Akhmetov has stressed the need to build a nuclear power station in the country.

"The Energy [and Mineral Resources] Ministry's most serious task is to prepare the feasibility study on the construction of an atomic station in Kazakhstan," the prime minister said, speaking at a government meeting in Astana. "The postponement of this process is one of the problems that will hamper industrial and innovation development," he stressed. In connection with this, Akhmetov instructed the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry "to set up a working group to study the problem and submit proposals within the first quarter of this year." (The Times of Central Asia, January 25, 2005)

First Communications Satellite to Be Launched by June 20

19. The launch of the first Kazakhstani satellite Kazsat should take place before June 20, said the Head of the Space Communications Complex Department Alexander Martynov. He also announced that they were considering all possibilities to launch the satellite earlier. Answering journalists' questions, he mentioned that they did not think they had disrupted the launch schedule. "The contract on Kazsat does not exclude the possibility of delaying the launch," he added. According to the PM D. Akhmetov, Kazakhstan intends to launch three satellites in the next 24-30 months, including a second geostationary land remote-sensing satellite and a telecom satellite. By 2012, according to Head of Kazkosmos Company Serik Turzhanov, Kazakhstan plans to create four telecom satellites, four land remote-sensing

satellites and several satellites for the global navigation system (Interfax-Kazakhstan, January 25-26, 2006).

Many Lives Lost Due to Severe Weather

10. Severe frosts in Kazakhstan beginning the second week of January caused numerous problems and even resulted in several deaths. As a result of avalanches in the mountains, two people died in Almaty and one woman in the Fabrichnoye settlement. Seven people died from frostbite in Kostanai oblast, while 15 people were frostbitten in Astana. Ten people suffered hypothermia effects in Petropavlovsk and another ten in Pavlodar, some of which had their legs amputated. Both the "Tulpar" train from Astana to Almaty and a bus with 40 passengers traveling from Almaty to Urdzhar were evacuated midway into their routes by road police and employees of the Emergency Situations Service. (Interfax-Kazakhstan, January 19-31, 2006).

Violations Discovered in the "Drinking Water" Program

11. Despite the fact that the first stage of the program "Drinking Water" for 2002-2005 has been completed, the water supply system in rural areas continues to decay. As a result, the General Procurator's Office took an interest in the program implementation by investigating its progress in the Pavlodar oblast. The investigation showed that 10 million tenge of state money had been misused. Specifically, in the villages of Mikhailovka and Alakol acceptance certificates read that the Contractor had been paid 24 million tenge, though the actual cost of performed work did not exceed 13.5 million tenge. Additionally, the "new" water supply systems do not work. Officials from the Committee for Water Resources signed these certificates, inflicting financial damage totaling eight million tenge. Similar violations have been revealed in the Akmola oblast by the contractor "Astanaavtostroy." The General Procurator's Office stated that the Department for Economic Crimes and Corruption initiated proceedings against the Director of "Astanaavtostroy." Additionally, the damage in Akmola oblast totaled 12 million tenge. (Izvestiya, January 24, 2006)

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